

## Citizen Involvement With Land Use Pre-Application Conferences

### Declaration:

I have read this brochure and agree to conduct myself according to the procedures listed, particularly observing the stated goal of productive and constructive discussion.

Print name

Signature

Date

Address

E-Mail Address

**Please return signed forms to the City of West Linn prior to attending a pre-application conference:**

City of West Linn  
Planning Department  
22500 Salamo Road #1000  
West Linn, OR 97068

**Positive and constructive discussion is the goal of a pre-application conference.**

**Confrontational language or hostile behavior is not tolerated at pre-application conferences.**

**Your participation as a neighborhood representative is welcomed and appreciated.**



CITY OF  
**West Linn**

This publication seeks to increase public involvement with West Linn land use pre-application conferences.

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Planning Department  
22500 Salamo Road #1000  
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## Citizen Involvement With Land Use Pre-Application Conferences

### What is a land use pre-application conference?

Pre-application conferences (also called “pre-apps”) are required by the Community Development Code (CDC) before someone is allowed to apply for a land use permit. Land use permits are required for any type of development project, such as a subdivision or new commercial center.

At pre-apps, prospective applicants meet with city staff to find out if their development proposal has any chance of being approved. Prospective applicants ask questions to find out what kind of conditions of approval to expect - “Will I have to install streets?” or, “Do I need to install a new water line?” Staff answers these types of questions based on the CDC and professional experience. Ultimately, pre-apps are a screening process: they can take an average design and make it better. Thus, about 25 percent of all potential applications end at the pre-app level. Conversely, they allow city staff to examine a poor design and make it clear that staff and/or local citizens will not support it.

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### Why citizen involvement in the pre-app conference?

The involvement of citizens who live within the neighborhood boundaries of the proposed development application is important. Citizens can introduce the applicant and city staff to issues and design possibilities of which they may not be aware. Citizen participation also improves transparency in the land use process. To encourage participation, the City of West Linn requires that prospective citizen pre-app attendees read this brochure and sign the declaration form to become a neighborhood pre-app representative.

## How do I get involved?

A list of scheduled pre-apps is on the City web site at <http://westlinnoregon.gov/planning>. Also, your Neighborhood Association president will receive a mailed list of scheduled pre-apps. Contact your Neighborhood Association president to let them know you wish to represent your Neighborhood Association regarding a specific development proposal within your Neighborhood Association boundary as a neighborhood representative. You will need to work it out with your Neighborhood Association as to who will attend.

If you have been designated by your Neighborhood Association as the neighborhood representative for a specific pre-app, please contact Wendy Seley at 503-656-4211 or at [wseley@westlinnoregon.gov](mailto:wseley@westlinnoregon.gov) and she will get the pre-app materials to you before the pre-app, or you may get them from the city web site at <http://westlinnoregon.gov/planning>.

Pre-apps for projects outside your Neighborhood Association boundary are the responsibility of those Neighborhood Associations. Check with the affected Neighborhood Association and if they do not plan to attend, you may attend in their place. Please note that if a proposed project in another Neighborhood Association is within 500 feet of your Neighborhood Association boundary, then your Neighborhood Association may also attend the pre-app meeting.

Since all land use applications are decided by the decision making body (e.g. the Planning Commission) based on the approval criteria of the CDC, you may want to familiarize yourself with the applicable CDC section (*for example, a subdivision is reviewed within the context of CDC Chapter 85*). The CDC is available on the City's website at <http://westlinnoregon.gov/planning>.

## How many neighborhood representatives may attend?

No more than two neighborhood representatives are permitted to attend a pre-app. There is a limit on the number of neighborhood representatives because of limited seating and to avoid pre-apps from becoming de facto hearings which could stifle the free exchange of information.

## What happens at a pre-app?

Pre-application conferences are held at City Hall on the first and third Thursdays of each month, generally between 8:00 and noon. Applicants pay a fee of \$350 or \$1,000 depending on the type of application that is proposed. The average pre-app conference lasts one hour.

The pre-app meeting begins by having everyone introduce themselves. The applicant usually has one or more engineering and planning consultants in attendance. These consultants will be responsible for preparing the application. City staff typically includes planners and engineers. If it is a large commercial, public, or office building, the City Building Official may also attend. Sites that are heavily forested may require the attendance of the City Arborist.

Then, the applicant explains their proposal. The applicant also identifies issues and questions that they need answered. The applicant usually provides drawings and maps ahead of time so that staff can familiarize themselves with the proposal. In most cases, staff will have visited the site to get a better idea of the site constraints and opportunities. We would encourage neighborhood representatives to do the same but you need to avoid trespassing on private property. Often, photographs of the site are available.

The City departments then take turns commenting on the proposal; during these comments the applicant is free to ask questions and gain clarification.

The Engineering Department discusses utilities (water, fire hydrants, sanitary sewer and storm drainage), availability of service, need for street improvements, road alignments and the need for additional right of way, traffic studies, etc.

The Planning Department discusses architecture, site layout, site design, resource protection, and other zoning requirements. Staff may also recommend a different layout to better agree with the CDC.

Planning also explains the CDC submittal requirements and approval criteria, and answers questions, such as, "How long the process will take?" "Is it a Planning Director or Planning Commission decision?" "How much will the application cost?"

## What is the role of a neighborhood representative?

Toward the end of the pre-app, the neighborhood representative may ask questions or comment on the proposal. Ideally, the neighborhood representative will have discussed the pre-app with other members of their Neighborhood Association so they can pass along the views or concerns of the neighborhood. The applicant is more agreeable at this early stage to consider changes and new designs since they have not invested in a lot of expensive architectural designs and reports.

Please remember that positive and constructive discussion is the goal. It is easier to attract bees with honey rather than vinegar. With that in mind, confrontational language or hostile behavior will not be tolerated and will jeopardize future participation in the program.

Because neighborhood representatives may not have had time to study all aspects of the plan or may not know all the Neighborhood Associations' concerns, there is nothing wrong with simply taking notes and listening in on the staff-applicant dialogue. Both staff and the applicant know that just because one of the parties in the room may listen patiently to the proposal it should not be construed to imply any kind of support of, or agreement with, all aspects of the proposal, particularly if the information provided by the applicant is limited.

After the pre-app, staff prepares a written summary of the pre-application conference. This summary is mailed to all attendees and posted on the City's web site. The neighborhood representative has an obligation to share the information with the Neighborhood Association.

## Who can I contact with questions about pre-apps?

Please contact the Planning Department at 503-656-4211 or [tzak@westlinnoregon.gov](mailto:tzak@westlinnoregon.gov) if you have additional questions about pre-application conferences.

## Online resources:

<http://westlinnoregon.gov/planning>